## **KENTUCKY SPRING TURKEY HUNTING SUMMARY – 2019**

by Zak Danks, KDFWR Turkey Program Coordinator

This is a summary of turkey harvest data from the 2019 spring hunting season. Harvest totals include all turkeys reported through Telecheck and the KDFWR website. Statewide youth season was April 6-7 (2 days) and regular season was April 13 through May 5 (23 days) in all 120 counties. Bag limit was 2 bearded birds. Season dates and bag limits differed on some federal properties.



## **Highlights**

- Overall statewide harvest (29,495) was 8% higher than last spring, 3% lower than the 5-year average, and 7% lower than the 10-year average (Table 1, Figures 1 5). Youth season harvest (1,525) was up 38%.
- Harvest increased 5-17% in 7 of 9 Commission Districts and 1-16% in the 5 Wildlife Division Regions (Table 1, Figure 5).
- Based on past trends, the better reproduction observed over most of the state in summer 2018 could lead to an even higher gobbler harvest in spring 2020 (Figure 2).
- Logan County led in total harvest (Fig. 3); Green County led in harvest per square mile (Fig. 4, Table 3).
- Several public areas topped 40 turkeys harvested (Table 4).
- Harvest increased in 80 counties (67%), decreased in 35 (29%), and was the same in 5 counties (4%; Table 5, Figures 3 and 4).
- Better weather led to a much greater harvest on opening weekend, which accounted for most of this season's increase (Figure 6).

**Table 1.** 2019 Kentucky spring turkey harvest compared to last season, averages for periodic intervals, and the rate of change in harvest annualized over the past 10 years.

Turkeys Harveste	2018	5-year Avg. (2015-2019)	10-year Avg. (2010-2019)	Avg. Since 23-Day Season (2006-2019)	Annual Rate of Change (2010-2019)	
Total Spring Harvest	29,495	+8%	-3%	-7%	-2.8%	-1.8%
1st District	3,525	+15%	+0%	+0%	+0.1%	+0.1%
2nd District	5,206	+17%	+2%	-4%	-0.8%	-0.8%
3rd District	1,564	+9%	-5%	-11%	-2.8%	-2.8%
4th District	5,489	+13%	+5%	+0%	-0.9%	-0.9%
5th District	2,831	+7%	-7%	-9%	-2.4%	-2.4%
6th District	3,124	+8%	-4%	-8%	-1.6%	-1.6%
7th District	2,210	-3%	-13%	-17%	-3.1%	-3.1%
8th District	2,846	+5%	-4%	-2%	-1.6%	-1.6%
9th District	2,700	-2%	-12%	-14%	-2%	-2%
Bluegrass Region	6,251	+7%	-4%	-7%	-3.3%	-1.7%
Green River Region	8,932	+16%	+2%	-5%	-1%	-1.2%
Northeast Region	4,025	+6%	-5%	-4%	-1.7%	-2.2%
Purchase Region	3,525	+15%	+0%	+0%	+6.3%	+0.1%
Southeast Region	6,762	+1%	-9%	-13%	-7.5%	-2.3%

**Table 2.** 2019 Kentucky spring turkey harvest by age and sex of turkeys harvested and weapon type.

			Age/Se	X	Weapon Type			
Tota	al Turkeys	Gobblers	Jakes	Bearded Hens	Shotgun	Bow	Crossbow	Muzzleloader
#	29,236	29,236	3,820	259	29,078	257	88	72
%	100%	87%	13%	<1%	99%	<1%	<1%	<1%

**Table 3.** Top 10 Kentucky counties for 2019 spring turkey harvest (total reported kill) and harvest density (reported kill per square mile of county land area).

	l by Harves	st	Ranked by Harvest Density				
County	Harv- est	Harvest / Mile <sup>2</sup>	% Change from Last Spring	County	Harv- est	Harvest / Mile <sup>2</sup>	% Change from Last Spring
Logan	679	1.22	+28%	Green	402	1.39	+17%
Muhlenberg	592	1.23	+16%	Pendleton	389	1.38	0%
Pulaski	555	0.82	+9%	Robertson	131	1.31	+32%
Hardin	552	0.88	+10%	Anderson	263	1.29	+12%
Christian	539	0.74	+35%	Campbell	202	1.27	+21%
Hart	524	1.25	+24%	Metcalfe	368	1.26	+11%
Ohio	482	0.81	+9%	Hart	524	1.25	+24%
Hopkins	473	0.85	+14%	Bracken	261	1.25	-5%
Adair	466	1.13	+20%	Muhlenberg	592	1.23	+16%
Breckinridge	456	0.78	+11%	Washington	369	1.23	+6%

**Table 4.** Top 10 Kentucky public hunting areas for 2019 spring turkey harvest.

Public Hunting Area	Harvest	% Jakes	Acreage	Acres per Turkey
Daniel Boone National Forest	371	8.9%	638,529	1,721
Peabody WMA	178	13.5%	45,679	257
Fort Knox Military Reservation	125	13.6%	109,000	872
Land Between The Lakes	89	6.7%	107,594	1,209
Green River Lake WMA	67	11.9%	21,037	314
Taylorsville Lake WMA	41	24.4%	9,417	230
Clay WMA	39	33.3%	8,953	230
Clarks River NWR	31	9.7%	9,500	306
West Kentucky WMA	30	13.3%	6,425	214
Big Rivers WMA & State Forest	27	22.2%	7,574	281

**Table 5.** 2019 Kentucky spring turkey harvest by county compared to last season, averages for periodic intervals, and the rate of change in harvest annualized over the past 10 years.

Turkeys Harvested						
County	2019	1-yr. avg. (2018)	5-yr. avg. (2015-2019)	10-year avg. (2010-2019)	Avg. Since 23-Day Season (2006-2019)	10-year Rate of Change
All Counties	29,495	+8%	-3%	-7%	+0%	-3%
Adair	466	+20%	+11%	+15%	+22%	+2%
Allen	320	+7%	-1%	-15%	-10%	-3%
Anderson	263	+12%	+2%	-5%	-2%	-3%
Ballard	199	-1%	-1%	+4%	+13%	+1%
Barren	387	+12%	+10%	+7%	+15%	+1%
Bath	221	+9%	+4%	+6%	+15%	+0%
Bell	148	+13%	-19%	-25%	-23%	-3%
Boone	191	+15%	-8%	-13%	-17%	-4%
Bourbon	107	-6%	-12%	-9%	+3%	+2%
Boyd	109	+31%	+1%	-6%	-10%	-4%
Boyle	110	+28%	+3%	+3%	+13%	-1%
Bracken	261	-5%	-16%	-13%	-12%	-2%
Breathitt	153	-19%	-29%	-38%	-37%	-6%
Breckinridge	456	+11%	-8%	-14%	-12%	-2%
Bullitt	154	+17%	+5%	+1%	+1%	-2%
Butler	444	+7%	-4%	-10%	-11%	-3%
Caldwell	220	+11%	-9%	-17%	-16%	-2%
Calloway	262	+34%	+2%	-1%	+2%	-2%
Campbell	202	+21%	-4%	-5%	-6%	-2%
Carlisle	168	+21%	-1%	-3%	+2%	-1%
Carroll	135	-1%	+1%	-7%	-14%	-3%
Carter	272	-7%	-9%	-6%	-7%	-2%
Casey	309	+3%	-6%	-6%	-1%	-2%
Christian	539	+35%	+10%	+14%	+25%	+3%
Clark	201	-1%	-10%	-15%	-9%	-2%
Clay	186	-11%	-16%	-20%	-16%	-3%
Clinton	214	+11%	+4%	+6%	+18%	+1%
Crittenden	344	+20%	-3%	-20%	-22%	-3%
Cumberland	300	-10%	-10%	-14%	-12%	-2%
Daviess	228	+45%	+21%	+5%	+5%	+0%
Edmonson	265	+20%	+1%	-9%	-3%	-1%
Elliott	146	-8%	-11%	-11%	-11%	-3%
Estill	151	+9%	-17%	-22%	-21%	-5%
Fayette	70	+17%	+4%	+6%	+27%	+5%
Fleming	244	+11%	+10%	+27%	+35%	+2%
Floyd	161	+7%	-6%	-8%	-4%	-2%
Franklin	185	+1%	-4%	-3%	+4%	-1%

Fulton	91	+0%	+10%	+21%	+34%	+3%
County	2019	1-yr. avg. (2018)	5-yr. avg. (2015-2019)	10-year avg. (2010-2019)	Avg. Since 23-Day Season (2006-2019)	10-year Rate of Change
Gallatin	91	-2%	+1%	+0%	-10%	-1%
Garrard	176	-2%	-4%	-13%	-6%	-2%
Grant	285	+16%	+0%	+2%	+1%	-1%
Graves	419	+6%	-1%	-4%	+0%	-2%
Grayson	447	+0%	-11%	-20%	-16%	-3%
Green	402	+17%	+17%	+10%	+16%	+0%
Greenup	197	-3%	-3%	+5%	+8%	-2%
Hancock	166	+14%	+2%	-1%	+0%	+0%
Hardin	552	+10%	+7%	-6%	-2%	-2%
Harlan	141	-19%	-26%	-29%	-25%	-2%
Harrison	252	-1%	-4%	-3%	+4%	-2%
Hart	524	+24%	+0%	-11%	-7%	-3%
Henderson	230	+22%	+3%	+3%	+10%	+0%
Henry	252	+20%	-5%	-19%	-17%	-4%
Hickman	140	+1%	-7%	+1%	+12%	+1%
Hopkins	473	+14%	-2%	-7%	-1%	-1%
Jackson	227	+4%	-9%	-8%	-4%	-2%
Jefferson	77	-1%	-13%	-17%	-10%	-3%
Jessamine	85	+9%	-8%	-9%	+5%	-1%
Johnson	161	+41%	+4%	-7%	-7%	-4%
Kenton	108	-6%	-15%	-19%	-20%	-2%
Knott	180	-8%	-18%	-21%	-17%	-3%
Knox	217	-4%	-10%	-9%	+0%	-1%
LaRue	193	+4%	-4%	-16%	-15%	-4%
Laurel	340	+4%	-6%	-4%	+7%	+0%
Lawrence	170	-10%	-18%	-26%	-26%	-6%
Lee	111	+19%	-8%	-15%	-13%	-4%
Leslie	120	-23%	-17%	-25%	-24%	-4%
Letcher	172	+13%	-9%	-13%	-8%	-2%
Lewis	307	+0%	-4%	+8%	+16%	+0%
Lincoln	366	+7%	+7%	+5%	+15%	-1%
Livingston	239	+6%	-10%	-24%	-27%	-4%
Logan	679	+28%	+8%	+0%	+9%	+0%
Lyon	204	+48%	+9%	+19%	+31%	+3%
Madison	295	+5%	-2%	-7%	+1%	-2%
Magoffin	115	-8%	-5%	-10%	-9%	-4%
Marion	325	+32%	+12%	+15%	+21%	+1%
Marshall	179	-3%	-10%	-11%	-6%	-2%
Martin	110	-8%	-9%	-3%	-1%	-2%
Mason	213	+5%	+14%	+17%	+18%	-1%
McCracken	208	+27%	+9%	+14%	+22%	+2%
McCreary	122	-22%	-30%	-43%	-41%	-6%

McLean	180	+18%	+4%	-12%	-15%	-3%
Meade	232	+30%	+2%	-4%	-1%	-2%
County	2019	1-yr. avg. (2018)	5-yr. avg. (2015-2019)	10-year avg. (2010-2019)	Avg. Since 23-Day Season (2006-2019)	10-year Rate of Change
Menifee	134	+14%	-10%	-20%	-17%	-4%
Mercer	175	+0%	-2%	-6%	+2%	+0%
Metcalfe	368	+11%	+10%	+13%	+16%	+1%
Monroe	302	+12%	+5%	-8%	-5%	-2%
Montgomery	152	+23%	+6%	+3%	+11%	-1%
Morgan	267	+2%	-12%	-15%	-15%	-3%
Muhlenberg	592	+16%	+0%	-4%	+0%	+0%
Nelson	303	+6%	-4%	-6%	-3%	-2%
Nicholas	170	+7%	-5%	-6%	-4%	-2%
Ohio	482	+9%	-5%	-8%	-9%	-1%
Oldham	112	-17%	-21%	-24%	-21%	-4%
Owen	405	+16%	-1%	-7%	-11%	-3%
Owsley	66	+0%	-24%	-31%	-32%	-5%
Pendleton	389	+0%	-14%	-16%	-16%	-3%
Perry	177	-13%	-13%	-16%	-8%	-3%
Pike	270	-13%	-19%	-22%	-17%	-3%
Powell	105	+3%	-16%	-23%	-22%	-4%
Pulaski	555	+9%	+2%	+2%	+10%	+0%
Robertson	131	+32%	+0%	+12%	+12%	+1%
Rockcastle	250	+11%	-5%	-17%	-16%	-3%
Rowan	214	+2%	-9%	-7%	-8%	-3%
Russell	197	-2%	-7%	-7%	-1%	-1%
Scott	207	+17%	+11%	+12%	+15%	-1%
Shelby	306	+6%	-7%	-15%	-14%	-4%
Simpson	183	+9%	+3%	+8%	+21%	+4%
Spencer	227	+19%	+6%	-3%	+0%	-3%
Taylor	286	+27%	+16%	+16%	+27%	+1%
Todd	332	+24%	+2%	-3%	+5%	-1%
Trigg	313	+14%	-2%	+8%	+19%	+3%
Trimble	129	-10%	-20%	-33%	-37%	-5%
Union	135	+22%	+3%	-9%	-3%	-2%
Warren	409	+9%	+2%	-2%	+6%	+0%
Washington	369	+6%	+11%	+12%	+18%	+1%
Wayne	391	-5%	-9%	-16%	-8%	-4%
Webster	353	+17%	+0%	-5%	+0%	-1%
Whitley	317	-5%	-13%	-7%	+2%	-1%
Wolfe	93	-11%	-14%	-13%	-6%	-4%

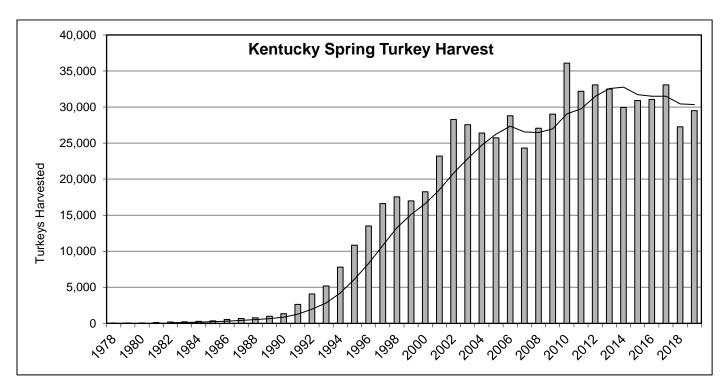
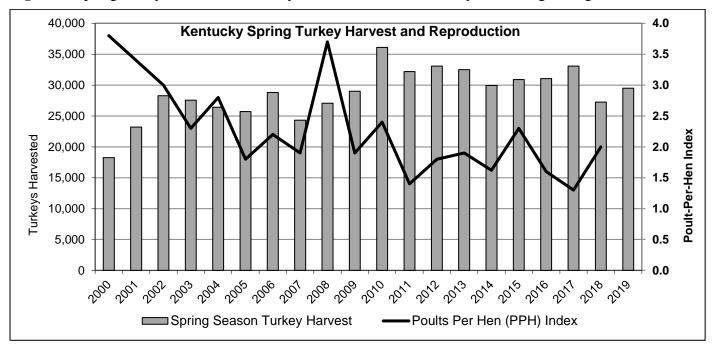


Figure 1. Spring turkey harvest in Kentucky, 1978-2019. Line is the 5-year moving average.



**Figure 2.** Spring harvest and reproduction of Kentucky wild turkeys, 2000-2019 (since Telecheck). Bars show numbers of turkeys harvested (left vertical axis); line shows poult-per-hen ratio from brood survey, which indexes reproduction (right vertical axis). In 4 of 8 years when reproduction increased, spring harvest increased 2 years later (for example, 2015 and 2017). The large spike in reproduction observed in 2008 was due to a periodical cicada hatch that affected the eastern two-thirds of the state; the record spring harvest followed 2 years later in 2010.

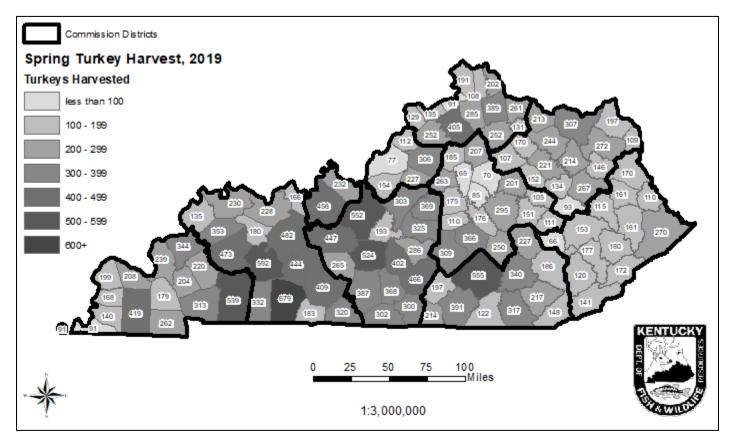
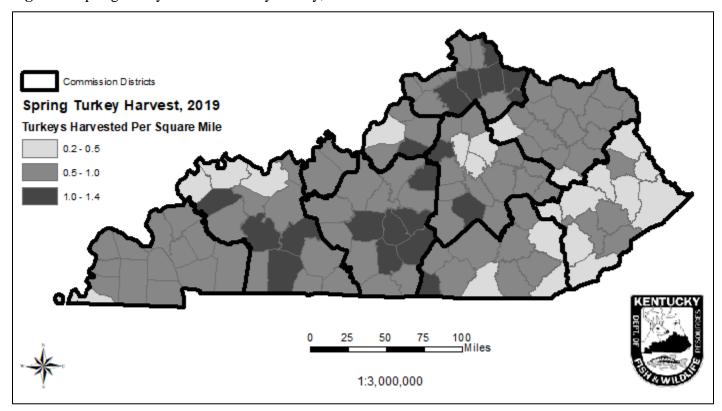
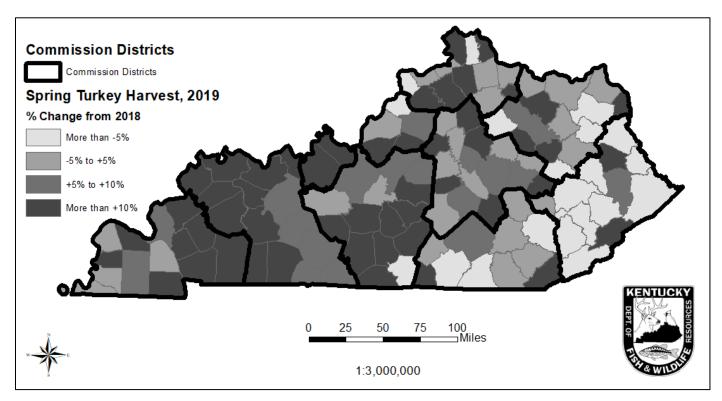


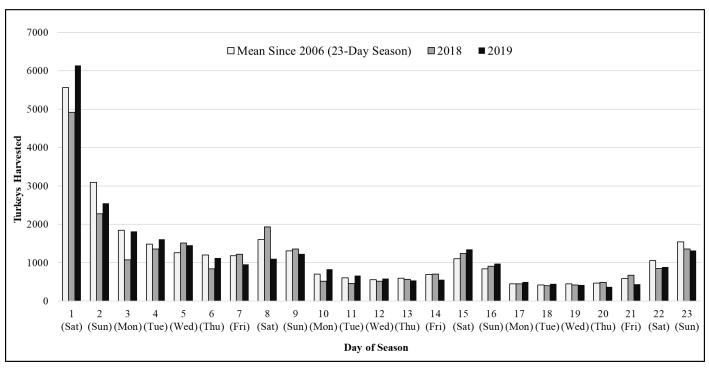
Figure 3. Spring turkey harvest totals by county, 2019. KDFWR Commission District shown for reference.



**Figure 4.** Spring turkey harvest per square mile by county, 2019. KDFWR Commission District shown for reference.



**Figure 5.** Percentage change in spring turkey harvest by county from 2018 to 2019. KDFWR Commission District shown for reference.



**Figure 6.** Spring turkey harvest by day of regular season. Daily totals for 2019, 2018, and the average since the regular season has been 23 days (2006).